

From the Mayors of Akron, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo

June 1, 2005

To the Editor
Ohio's Newspapers

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As Mayors of Ohio's largest cities, we stand united in urging the State of Ohio to protect our residents and those of many other communities, by restoring full funding to the Local Government Fund.


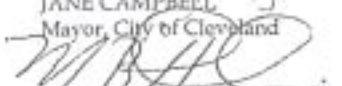
Through much debate, in both small towns and big cities, it has become clear that the front line of "homeland" security is "hometown" security - our local Police Officers and Firefighters. In addition, municipalities are the top provider of basic services to most Ohioans. The State and Federal Governments' continued passing of the buck is increasing the cost to municipal taxpayers for everything from school operations to safety services, from libraries to trash pick-up. This is unwise public policy and does nothing to move our great state forward.


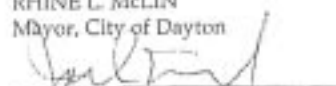
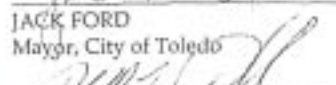
Ohio's cities are a critical part of the state's future. Significant studies have shown that our state's 15 major urban areas are the main drivers of Ohio's economy, generating over 84% of Ohio's jobs and over 86% of workers' wages. Furthermore, the study shows that Ohio's top six metros represent more than 70% of Ohio's economy based on their gross metro products.

While the Ohio Senate has made a minor change to the proposed LGF budget cuts, providing additional relief for counties, townships and villages, there are 60 cities in Ohio that receive more than \$1 million from this proven initiative and will get almost no relief. And don't be fooled - Ohio's six largest cities are still being cut by nearly 20%. It is patently unfair to punish cities through this proposal solely because we are urban areas. We represent a selection of the cities that have proven they can balance budgets, which have proven they can build regional partnerships to cut costs, which have proven they are fighting every day to re-invigorate the State's lagging economy. To play rural communities and villages against small towns, counties and bigger cities disrespects our state's diversity, our shared history, and our shared responsibility to improve the quality of life for all Ohioans.

This plan threatens the public safety of those who live and work in our cities on an unprecedented scale, and it is a step in the wrong direction for rebuilding our economy. It is foolhardy to think Ohio can cut basic services to the communities where most Ohioans live or work without cutting the quality of life that continues to make this a good state to live in. For 70 years our State Legislature and local leaders have maintained this partnership, because it works and because it returns tax dollars to be invested in critical basic services. In 2005, Ohio needs leaders to put aside politics and parochialism and do what is right for all our citizens and our shared future.

Sincerely,


JANE CAMPBELL
Mayor, City of Cleveland

MICHAEL B. COLEMAN
Mayor, City of Columbus


RHINE L. McLIN
Mayor, City of Dayton

JACK FORD
Mayor, City of Toledo

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